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RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY 0975  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0307  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0676  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0216  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAR ES SALAAM 000819

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DEPT AF/E FOR BYODER AND MBEYZEROV,  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [MOPS](#) [IR](#) [SO](#) [ZI](#) [TZ](#)  
SUBJECT: TANZANIA: FOREIGN MINISTER MEMBE DISCUSSES  
COMOROS, SOMALIA, IRAN, AND ZIMBABWE

REF: A. DAR ES SALAAM 0782  
[1](#)B. DAR ES SALAAM 0158

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires D.Purnell Delly for  
reasons 1.4(b,d).

#### Summary

[1](#)1. (C) The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Bernard Membe, told the Charge June 6 that Tanzania will join an AU mission to stabilize the situation in the Comoros Islands, by sending a company of 200 soldiers to monitor upcoming elections and train the Comoran army. The Minister confirmed that the Government of Tanzania (GOT) intends to train 1,000 Somali officers once the Somali authorities present a list of trainees that includes members from all clans. He noted that Iran has invited senior level GOT officials to visit Tehran three times in the last six months, but President Kikwete does not want to send a GOT delegation to Iran, fearing it could be manipulated by the Iranians or misinterpreted by friends, including the U.S. Membe noted that Iran is "feeling isolated" and rebuffed by Tanzania as evidenced by an irate letter from the Iranian Ambassador in Tanzania he had received the previous day. Minister Membe admitted that the reconciliation process in Zimbabwe is becoming more complicated due to Mugabe's proposed constitutional amendments. However, the SADC initiative continues and President Kikwete will soon consult with President Mbeki on progress before the next meeting of SADC heads of state, scheduled for August in Lusaka. End summary.

#### Tanzania joins AU response to Comoros crisis

[1](#)2. (C) The Foreign Minister called the Charge to the MFA June 6 to inform the USG that Tanzania will be joining South Africa, Senegal, and other African Union (AU) member countries to try to stabilize the Comoran crisis. He briefly outlined events leading up to the secession of the island of Anjouan (Nzwani) under its President who is currently supported by an armed militia of nearly 600 members. Membe said that South Africa will send 123 police officers to

Anjouan to police the island and to monitor upcoming elections. Tanzania will send a company of 200 soldiers to Grand Comore also for monitoring, but more importantly to build the capacity of the national Comoran army which only numbers 1,000 troops. The Tanzanian force will travel to Comoros on June 10 and anticipates staying for two to three months. Smaller contributions to the AU effort will be sent by Senegal (60 personnel) and Sudan (50 personnel).

#### Somalia

13. (C) Charge took the opportunity to ask the Foreign Minister for updates on Somalia, Zimbabwe and Iran. On Somalia, Minister Membe told the Charge the Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces' (TPDF) training of Somalia military officers is on track, but contingent on TPDF approval of the nominated trainees (Ref A). On the advice of the Somali Ambassador to Ethiopia, Tanzania wants to be certain that the 1,000 officers they will train are not only from one or two clans in Somalia and thus strengthen the power of certain warlords. Membe admitted this could "hinder" the start of the training since President Abdullah Yusuf of Somalia "is a warlord himself" and may not readily agree to nominating officers from a broad spectrum of clans.

14. (C) Minister Membe was extremely concerned about the deteriorating situation in Somalia. He noted that Eritrea does not like the presence of the Ethiopian troops, fearing that they would stay in Somalia once the country is stabilized and use Somalia as a base during any future armed conflict with Eritrea. The Ethiopians do not like the presence of the Ugandan troops who are dedicated to establishing peace and stability, and once accomplished,

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leaving to let the Somali government rule. According to Membe, the most disturbing development is that weapons are being supplied by Eritrea to civilians, warlords, and "almost anyone willing to fight against the 'aggressors', i.e. the Ethiopian and Ugandan troops." Membe said he had spoken with President Museveni recently who is gravely concerned about the level of violence in Somalia.

15. (C) Membe expressed his appreciation that the USG has pledged USD 40 million toward the stabilization of Somalia. He told the Charge that he instructed Tanzania's representatives to the June 6-7 International Contact Group on Somalia meeting in London to ask the USG representatives if up to USD 4 million of the USG's pledge could be used to assist in training the Somali officers. He expressed concern that the current Somali government is a "government of convenience" rather than principle. He promised to give the Embassy an update on the timetable for training Somali officers once the GOT delegation returns from London.

Iran: Irate that the GOT has not agreed to visit Tehran

16. (C) Membe shared that on June 5 he had received an "accusatory and angry" letter from the Ambassador of Iran to Tanzania complaining that the GOT has turned down three separate invitations to visit Tehran: first, a verbal invitation to President Kikwete extended by the FM of Iran at the Addis Ababa AU summit in January 2007 (Ref B), followed by a written invitation to Kikwete in February and to Vice President Shein in April. Membe related that President Kikwete does not want to send the "wrong message" or be used by the GOI to show that they have the support of African nations. Kikwete clearly told the Iranian FM at the Addis AU meeting that "Tanzania is totally opposed to nuclear proliferation. What we are hearing from the IAEA in New York is of concern; Iran's nuclear program activities do not appear to be what is needed for peaceful uses of nuclear power."

17. (C) In Membe's view, Iran is "panicking" because they expected support from Tanzania and other African nations. In

particular, Iran might have been counting on Tanzania for "moral support" because President Kikwete is a Muslim. However, for Tanzania the issue is clearly to work with the international community toward halting any intentions Iran may have to develop nuclear weapons. President Kikwete believes at this juncture, a Tanzanian high-level delegation to Tehran could easily be manipulated by the GOI as a show of support for Iran's position.

#### Zimbabwe

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¶8. (C) Membe updated the Charge on the SADC Heads of State initiative on Zimbabwe, admitting that the situation has become "very complicated because both sides are digging in." The opposition has demanded that Robert Mugabe's government free opposition leaders who are still being held in detention. The Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) replied that could not happen until the opposition parties make a public statement recognizing Mugabe's government as Zimbabwe's legitimately elected government; the opposition has refused. Even more serious, Mugabe is attempting to "stack" the representation in the parliament in his favor. Constitutional amendments have been proposed to increase the number of representatives in both houses: 60 more representatives in the lower house and 18 more in the senate, all from the rural areas where Mugabe has the strongest support. This would prepare the way for a major constitutional change in the rules of succession should a Zimbabwean president die or become incapacitated.

¶9. (C) Currently, the Zimbabwe constitution states that the Vice President would take over and new elections would be held 90 days later. Mugabe is proposing that in case of the demise of the president, the parliament would chose the

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successor, who would remain president for a full term, until the next regularly scheduled elections are held. With a parliament "stacked" in favor of the ruling party, this virtually assures that Mugabe supporters would have a full-term presidency, even if he were to resign, die or be unable to govern for any reason.

¶10. (C) Membe admitted that due to these factors, the SADC reconciliation effort is "in big trouble." The next meeting of the SADC Heads of State is scheduled for August 12 in Lusaka, Zambia. Membe said before that date, President Kikwete will meet in person with President Mbeki of South Africa to get a full report on Mbeki's efforts to mediate and encourage the dialogue between Mugabe and the opposition.

#### Lesotho

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¶11. (C) Membe noted the SADC leaders are also extremely concerned about the situation in Lesotho. "In Maseru, it is a nightmare, a real crisis," Membe lamented. The opposition continues to be outraged that following the last election, the seats in parliament were not apportioned as the law required. According to Membe, opposition leaders have gained the support of most of the police force and some segments of the military. Thus if the opposition calls for a strike in Maseru or to halt traffic, nearly the entire city complies. Fearing the creation of conditions that could lead to a coup, President Kikwete, as head of a the SADC Troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, has asked the former president of Botswana, Ketumile Masire, who is well-respected in Lesotho and the region, to go to Maseru as a mediator in order to find a solution acceptable to both sides.

#### Membe's concerns about inaccurate press article

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¶12. (C) Minister Membe told the Charge he had wanted to personally express to the Embassy his outrage concerning a front page article in the local press (Sunday Citizen, June 3) that had, in his view, purposely misquoted him on the

relationship between the GOT and Israel. Tanzania broke diplomatic relations with Israel at the time of the 1967 War, but re-established ties after the relationship between Egypt and Israel was normalized. In recent years, the GOT has accepted both military training and development aid from Israel. The article implied that Tanzania did not have diplomatic relations with Israel and it quoted Membe as saying that African nations have been "pressured" to re-establish diplomatic ties with Israel "as a result of strong lobbying in the United States Congress."

¶13. (C) The Minister was clearly angry at this skewed press report, confiding to the Charge that he suspects the reporters, if not the editorial board, had collaborated with the Palestinian mission in Tanzania to create this story. Membe said since the diplomatic representatives of the Hamas government arrived in Tanzania, he has sensed a heightened level of frustration from the Palestinians. The Palestinian Ambassador had even told Membe that the GOT should have "checked with Palestine" before allowing a group of Tanzanian Parliamentarians to go on a fact-finding tour to Israel. Membe said he was going to summon the Palestinian Ambassador later that day to "set the record straight" that Tanzania enjoys a productive diplomatic relationship with Israel that is driven by clear-eyed economic and development interests and not due to pressure from any other nation, including the U.S.  
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